



eNews from Sen. Lisa Murkowski - Vol. 2, Issue 7 : : [Visit Senator Murkowski's Web Site](#)
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Murkowski Introduces Legislation Aimed at High Insurance Premiums

I joined Senators Rick Santorum (R-PA) and Elizabeth Dole (R-NC) in introducing legislation designed to assist low and moderate income Americans in paying for health insurance. The Helping Working Americans Afford Health Coverage Act of 2006 is intended to help working class families afford insurance. The introduction of this legislation coincides with National Cover the Uninsured Week.

More and more families are finding themselves unable to afford health insurance and without the means to seek necessary medical treatment, a reality that is simply unacceptable. Making health insurance more affordable will make a real difference to the nation's physical and economic health. This legislation takes a decisive step towards making health coverage available to the working populations with the greatest needs.

National Cover the Uninsured Week has been held for the past four years in the first week of May. During this time, bipartisan events are held throughout the nation in an effort to bring attention to the 46 million Americans who have no health insurance. In Alaska, 110,000 people do not have health insurance – a figure that represents nearly 17% of the state's population.

The Helping Working Americans Afford Health Coverage Act of 2006 will provide working class Americans with a refundable tax credit they can use to purchase health insurance. Eligible Alaskans would receive an annual refundable tax credit of up to \$3,000 per family, which would be advanced on a monthly basis. This bill also contains an important provision to address the higher health care costs in Alaska and increases the qualifying income thresholds for both individual Alaskans and Alaskan families by 25 percent.

U.S. Department of Education Announces Grants for 2006-2007 College Students

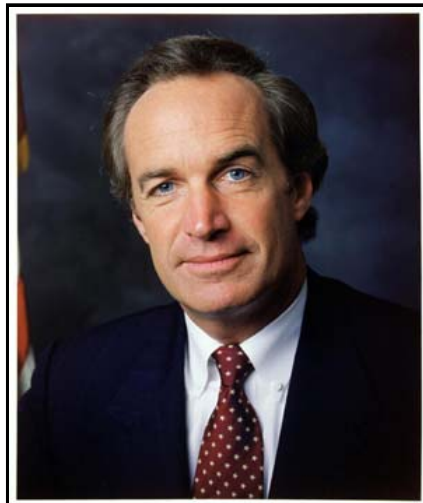
In 2005, Congress established two new grant programs to help meet the growing need for improved math, science, technology, engineering, and critical foreign language instruction - the Academic Competitiveness Grants and the National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent (SMART) Grants. The U.S. Department of Education recently announced guidelines to make these grants available to college students for the 2006-2007 academic year. For more information, [click here](#).



A visit with Alison Mall and Judith Jean Onslow, winners of the 2005 Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching

Interior Secretary Nominee Addresses Senate Energy Committee

I was impressed with the testimony given by Governor Dirk Kempthorne, the nominee to the position of United States Interior Secretary. His remarks struck a balance between the need to protect and provide access to our natural heritage with the need to develop our natural resources to the benefit of all Americans. Upon his anticipated confirmation, I look forward to working closely with Governor Kempthorne to advance Alaska's interests under the jurisdiction of the Interior Department.



Governor Kempthorne

UAF Introduces Science Education Outreach Network

UAF has compiled a list of math and science programs for students of all ages. The Science Education Outreach Network provides information about the extensive variety of science and math education outreach programs, activities and resources available within the University. To learn more visit this [link](#).

Alaskan Presidential Scholars Announced

I congratulate Alaska's Presidential Scholars: Jennifer Blankenship of Dimond High School in Anchorage and Matthew Smith of Chugiak High School.

Since its creation by Executive Order in 1964, the Presidential Scholars Program has honored more than 5,000 graduating high school seniors for academic excellence, artistic accomplishments, and civic contributions. These young people represent the good news about American education and the great promise that resides in our Nation's youth.

Each year this unique program invites more than 2,700 students to apply for recognition based on outstanding scores on the College Board SAT or ACT assessments. Applicants are further evaluated on the basis of school reports and transcripts, leadership activities, and contributions to family, school and community. The 121 Presidential Scholars honored annually for their scholarship and service include one young man and one young woman from each State, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and from U.S. families living abroad, plus an additional 15 "at-large" Scholars.

I look forward to meeting Jennifer and Matthew when they visit Washington, D.C. in June to participate in a series of educational, cultural and celebratory events that culminate in a White House-sponsored award ceremony.

May is National Bike-to-Work Month



With the warmer weather of Spring, I have parked my car and started commuting to work on my bicycle. It saves gas, helps me get exercise, and it's fun too.

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